

Socialist Worker

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For Workers Power and International Socialism

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National lets private patients into public hospitals

by ANDREW GEDDIS

THE NATS are letting private, fee paying patients into public hospitals despite the fact that thousands of people are on waiting lists for operations.

They claim that by allowing private patients to buy treatment, hospitals will be able to use their "spare" operating space to treat patients in. This, so the Nats tell us, will allow hospitals to treat more people without disadvantaging pub-

lic patients.

But what the Nats are not telling us is that the reason hospitals have so much "spare" operating space is that they are vastly underfunded by the government.

Underfunding

At the moment regional health authorities (RHA's) are given money by the government to "buy" operations from Crown Health Enterprises (CHE's). The amount of operations a CHE can do depends on how

much money it is given by the RHA.

But the National government has consistently reduced the amount of money it gives to RHA's, meaning that they cannot buy all the operations from CHE's that are needed.

Waiting Lists

As a result, up to 80,000 people nationwide are on waiting lists for operations. Some procedures, such as hip replacements, have waiting times of up to 3 years before an

operation will be done.

By allowing private patients to buy treatment National is allowing those who can afford it to jump these waiting lists. At the same time, hospitals can make a nice profit on their operations.

Two tiers

This will lead to a "two tier" health system in which those who can afford it can buy treatment ahead of all others, instead of a fully funded public system for all.

Bolger's Decent Society



In the 1990 election campaign, Jim Bolger pledged to create a "decent society". Let's see how his promise has translated into reality.

THE COALITION for Public Health has announced that waiting lists for public hospitals have grown in the year to June by a massive 10%.

This is on top of an increase of 7% in the previous year. At present almost 80,000 people are on waiting lists for treatment in public hospitals around New Zealand.

A spokesperson for the Crown Health Enterprises Association stated that it was up to the regional health authorities to spend more on operations to clear the backlog.

TELECOM HAS announced a record \$338 million profit for the last six months. This is 15.2% higher than the profit for the previous six months.

Yet, despite the huge increase in profitability, it takes on average 10 hours to fix a fault for domestic users. This is in contrast to 1993 when it took only 6 hours to fix a fault.

Both Telecom's huge profit and its poorer services can be traced to the fact that it has sacked almost one third of its staff who were "surplus to [its] operating needs".

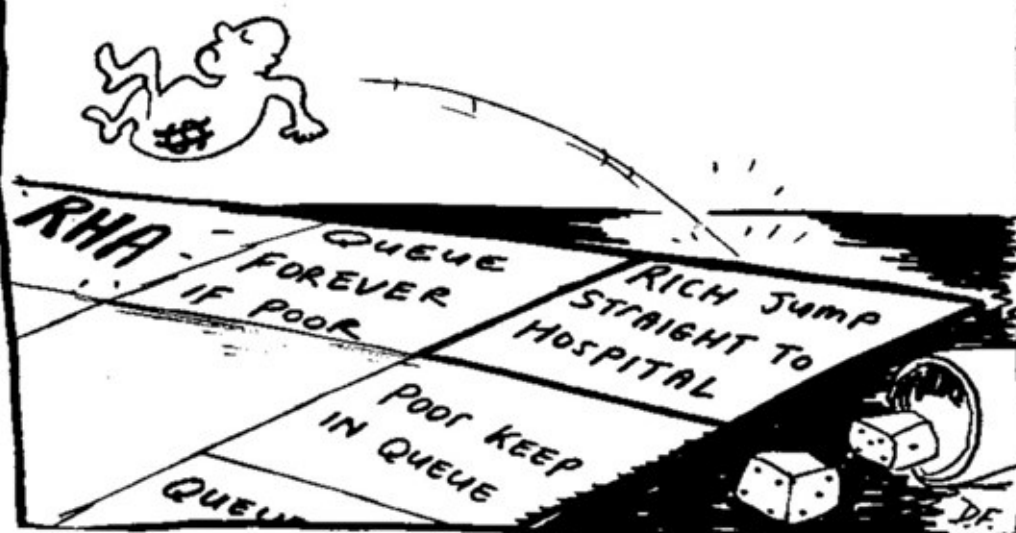
FIGURES RELEASED by Statistics Minister Maurice Williamson show that almost 65% of full-time workers in 1993-1994 earned less than the average hourly rate of \$15.35 (including overtime), or \$31,000 a year.

The figures were produced from the Household Economic Survey, and showed that the average hourly rate had risen by only 50 cents an hour since 1991.

What is more, the figures showed that 74% of women earned less than the hourly average rate.

THE NEW Zealand Forest and Bird Society has warned that continuing cutbacks in government spending on conservation are putting several species of rare birds at risk of extinction.

National's Latest Game



Lockwood Smith wants voucher education

GIVING VOUCHERS to parents for them to "buy" education from schools is the latest brainwave of National's Minister of Education, Lockwood Smith.

At an education conference in Canada last month he suggested that direct funding of schools could be replaced by giving parents "vouchers" which they could use to buy their children's education from the school of their "choice".

If parents wanted to send their kids to Auckland Grammar, so Lockwood suggests, they could use their voucher to "buy" education from there.

If they favoured a cheaper school, then they could use their voucher for that.

But what Lockwood Smith didn't say was just how poorer families were expected to meet the extra costs (such as uniforms and "activity fees") that upmarket schools such

as Auckland Grammar charge.

Nor did he explain how poorer schools are expected to compete with rich schools that have years of investment by well-off parents to give them an advantage.

Instead, Smith's idea is just another way (like his bulk funding idea) for the government to cut back on education spending and transfer the costs of it to individual families.

WHILE WAGES continue to fall, there is no shortage of growth in profits.

Carter Holt Harvey announced a record \$271 million profit in the six months to September, up by 36%. Yet this is the same company that refused its packaging division workers a 4% pay increase.

Fletcher Challenge reported a \$464 million profit in the six months to August, and chief executive Hugh Fletcher predicts a "substantial increase" on this in the next six months.

Last year Fletcher's paid only 2% in tax.

SHAC tenants beat HNZ eviction threats

HOUSING NZ has twice failed to carry out threats to evict state tenants defying the market rent increases. The two families are among a number who have recently joined the established group of rent strikers, and were the first to find



Christine and Percy Puaha & family

themselves summonsed to appear before the Tenancy Tribunal to face applications for eviction orders.

In the case of the Ringia's, a pensioner couple from Orakei steadfastly paying only 25% of their income, the Tribunal adjudicator refused to grant HNZ an order under section 56 of the Residential Tenancy Act which would have effectively fast-tracked this and other eviction orders for tenants in the same position.

The adjudicator did make it clear this respite was only temporary if HNZ chose to re-apply in another week when the rent reached 21 days in arrears.

The strong support for the tenants in the court and an even stronger showing at the home immediately afterwards, showed HNZ that any attempt to evict them was about to become a public

relations disaster for it and the government's market rent policy.

Despite fruitless visits to Income Support Services prior to the court appearance, when the Ringia's were told that a special benefit application would be declined - three days after the court case ISS requested an urgent meeting with the tenants.

With State Housing Action Coalition chairperson Peter Hughes present, Metua Ringia was informed that she has not received the last pension increase and that she and her husband should apply for disability allowances and tenure protection allowance. Meanwhile nothing has been heard from HNZ regarding rent arrears.

The second case involves the Puaha family of Manukau who have two children. One of these children is disabled, and

Christine Puaha is expecting twins. The family are adamant that they are currently paying as much rent as they can afford. They told HNZ that, with SHAC's support, they were unafraid of any tribunal outcome.

A court appearance scheduled for November 14 has been withdrawn by HNZ, even though there have been two unsuccessful mediations.

"Maybe HNZ are finally showing the human compassion they have been lacking for so long," suggested Peter Hughes "Or maybe they and their masters in the beehive are afraid of the bad publicity they know SHAC will deliver to them should any attempt be made to evict this poor family."

The message for tenants is clear. If it's good enough for the Ringia and Puaha families to pay 25% of their incomes in rent then it's good enough for all low income state tenants to get the same deal NOW.

Join SHAC and the partial rent strike - strike a blow against the government's market rents.

Contact SHAC on (09) 634-3984.

Strike beats bulk funding

AFTER A one-day wildcat strike teachers at Onehunga High School in Auckland, have defeated moves to introduce bulk funding at the school.

The Onehunga teachers walked out on September 21 after the school board

decided to become bulk funded. The board quickly announced it would reconsider, and has since reversed its decision.

This is not the first time direct action has defeated bulk funding (now misleadingly called "direct

resourcing").

Teachers in a Hamilton secondary school scored a similar victory several years ago after strike action.

Post Primary Teachers Association president Roger Tobin has said that only four secondary schools have chosen to take up "direct resourcing". Three which had taken it up under the initial three-year period have now decided to drop it.

The Onehunga teachers showed how bulk funding can be beaten.

Why the police-state climate for CHOGM?

ALMOST AS if they want to make the Nigerian military regime feel at home, the New Zealand state forces have taken unprecedented "security" precautions for the CHOGM meeting in Auckland.

Very few officials are thick enough to publicly suggest that any of their overseas visitors' lives are in danger while they are in Auckland. But the multi-million dollar exercise is not just a weird over-kill.

There are several reasons for it.

One is that there are a quite a number of unsavoury characters at CHOGM who have a lot of dirty crimes against human rights to hide and who want protection from any opposition.

The whole exercise, involving over a quarter of New Zealand's police force, is a good opportunity for police to import massively expensive new technology and try this and other new policing methods out - in preparation for future strikes and protests.

And thirdly it is an opportunity to try to acclimatise New Zealanders to accepted police-state methods of "security".

Not only are protest activities banned from Aotea



"This cop is really hurting my arm" shouts anti-CHOGM activist Sue Bradford as police drag her away

square, police have also banned marches.

They have special teams in para-military uniforms videotaping protest activities at close range, as well as street video cameras and direct linked video communication with police helicopters.

And in outer areas, like Rotorua, the depleted police numbers are being compensated for by arming routine police patrols.

As the gap between rich and poor widens at a tremendous rate our rulers know that the working class is getting angry. The police are there to maintain the law and order that keeps the rich rich and the poor poor.

And they know how hard it is to deal with organised mass opposition. That is why CHOGM is a good opportunity for the NZ police to develop its tactics and weaponry to deal with increasing domestic conflict.

That is the nature of capitalism.

That is why the working class cannot take power off their exploiters without a fight.



Pistol packing Rotorua cops

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If you can't trust the police, who can you trust?

TWO RECENT cases in Otago have shown up how violence is an everyday part of the police force in this country, and how members of the police use it.

The first case involved an officer convicted of assaulting his partner after she called off her relationship with him. She claimed he threw her across the kitchen, chased her outside, put her in a headlock and twisted her arm until she thought it would break - an experience many protesters will recognise.

However, the Judge in the case discharged him without conviction,

and suppressed his name as revealing it "would make it impossible for him to work in the Otago area".

At present the officer is suspended on full pay while the police decide whether or not he will lose his job.

In the second case an Oamaru-based police officer was convicted on three charges of assault for hitting arrested suspects with a baton and his fists. The officer's colleagues described him as "out of control" as he administered the beatings.

As both these cases show, far from being "neutral" guardians of law and order, the police force is a violent institution that relies on force to maintain the authority of those in power.

What is Labour's policy on protest?

TARIANA TURIA, a Maori list candidate for the Labour Party, has been told by Labour's leadership to "tone down" her comments. This came after she attacked the decision to jail for 21 days Maori protester Ken Mair (with whom she was involved in the occupation of Pakatore Marae in Whanganui) for contempt of court as "racist".

Mair was found guilty of contempt for reciting a karakia in a courtroom after the judge told him not to.

Turia is ranked at number 21 on the party list. She was told off by Labour's President, Maryann Street for not sticking to party policy.

But there was no such ticking off for Dover Samuels, who attacked Mair's actions and said New Zealanders were "sick and tired" of Maori protesters. Samuels, a Northland Maori, is number 4 on Labour's list.

Apparently Labour supports attacks on Maori protest action, but any support for it is out of step with party policy. Why else is Tariana Turia told off while Dover Samuels' comments go unchallenged?

AS A part of the US Republican Party's attack on the poor, Congress is slashing the amount it gives in loans to developing countries.

The US is meant to contribute \$1.2 billion in loans to developing nations. But it now plans to cut this back to only \$575 million.

Not content with hurting the poor at home, they are aiming at overseas.

what socialists say about...

The Monarchy

UNDER NEW Zealand's constitution, our head of state remains the Queen of England, even though we have "adopted" her as the Queen of New Zealand. This is a part of our colonial history dating back to the Treaty of Waitangi and England's claim of "sovereignty" over New Zealand.

Many people argue that this state of affairs is out of touch with modern realities. Why should someone on the other side of the world be considered the "head" of New Zealand just because she was born into the right family? Even Prime Minister Jim Bolger has questioned whether we should keep the Queen (or her successor) as our head of state.

Parasite

For socialists the entire idea of a monarchy is ridiculous. The notion that just because of birth a person has some right to head a country is a throwback to feudalism, when the rule of Kings, Queens, and nobles was seen as their "divine right" from god.

This undemocratic, elitist notion has been largely rejected today. But the "tradition" claimed to lie behind the monarchy means that they still continue to be kept at the expense of the state. The Queen and her family receive millions of dollars from the British government, even though she is the richest woman in Britain.

And when she or her children come to New Zealand it is us who foots the bill for it.

The entire royal family are parasites who produce nothing and live in luxury paid for by working people.

For these reasons socialists argue that the royal family should not only not be the head of New Zealand, but that their wealth should be stripped from them and used for the good of all of society.

But while socialists oppose the monarchy, we are cynical of calls from people like Jim Bolger or Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating to replace the Queen as Head of State and become a "republic".

This is because such a move would merely replace one figurehead with another. Whether they be a President or a Monarch, the appointing of a head of state has no relevance to the lives of the majority of New Zealanders.

Privilege

By supporting becoming a republic, people like Jim Bolger can appear to be promoting independence and self-determination without actually changing the way society works.

In a republic the economy would still be controlled by a very few, highly privileged individuals. What is more, as the economy becomes more and more global, claims that becoming a republic will strengthen New Zealand's independence are obviously empty.

It will not address the issue of tino rangitiratanga either. You can bet that in a republic most Maori (as well as most pakeha) will be no more in control of their lives than they are under the Queen.

In short, dumping the Queen would change next to nothing for the majority of New Zealanders. The republican debate is a way of distracting people from the real issues of importance.

If we want a society without privilege, where there is real equality no matter what your family, then we must dump more than the Queen.

■ ANDREW GEDDIS

THINGS THEY SAY

"Opposition to such a proposal would dwarf any seen in New Zealand before."

• Minister of Education, Lockwood Smith, on the likely reaction to his "voucher education" proposals for schools.

"...a calculating defiance of my ruling to bring about a situation where you, rather than I, conduct the proceedings of this court."

• Judge Anthony Adeane, holding Maori activist Ken Mair in contempt of court for reciting a karakia over his express orders.

"If you took the money off the bureaucrats and put it into Christchurch you would have 800 people getting operations that they now have to wait two or three years for. They call this efficiency."

• Jim Anderton, Leader of the Alliance, on the public health system.

"They are a level of bureaucracy we do not need"

• Jim Anderton, on RHA's.

"...if you give Roger the finance portfolio he will destroy you."

• Former Labour Prime Minister Bill Rowling, to former Labour Prime Minister David Lange on Roger Douglas.

"The Roman Catholic Church has tried to restrain the trade in papal memorabilia that marred the Pope's last US trip by banning "Pope-on-a-rope" soap and "Let Us Pray" lawn sprinklers."

• London Times report on the Pope's recent US visit.

Mental Health Crisis

Patients suffer while Nats look at "enquiry"

MENTAL HEALTH has always been the poor cousin of health services. And this has become even worse with the drive to a profit-driven privatised health system.

Playing on public abhorrence at the old Oakley-style mental hospitals, successive governments have introduced "community care" – which means that psychiatric patients have been de-institutionalised, shunted into private rest homes and boarding houses and left to their own devices.

Community care should mean constant monitoring and contact between the patient and qualified health and social workers. **BUT** there is tons of evidence that this is not happening.

Mental health has fallen victim to the cost-cutting and privatisation that is

destroying NZ public health.

Even the police and judiciary are complaining.

Police have said that they are dealing with more people with mental disorder and the condition of those being apprehended is worse. The new Mental Health Act made it easier to get people assessed for a disorder, but it is rare to get someone admitted to an institution, according to Christchurch Police Association spokesman Greg O'Connor.

High Court judge Williamson criticised the health system last month when sentencing a man who had 15 admissions to psychiatric institutions for manic depression since 1984.

"The end result is that a long-term psychiatric patient with major disorders will now be locked up in

jail rather than being cared for in hospital," Williamson said.

Medical Association chairman Dr Dennis Pezaro believes that community care could offer more care and security to patients with acute or long-term mental illness, but only if additional resources were made available.

Psychiatric inpatient services and resources are inadequate and underfunded according to Nurses Society national director David Wills.

The lack of services and resources means that delays in hospital treatment often occurred, he said.

It also meant that patients who required inpatient care, especially those requiring medium-term treatment in hospital, might have to be cared for in the community.

Wills said the problem of under-resourcing related to the general under-funding of the health service and the reduction of health services in most regions.

Since 1980 at least 3,836 psychiatric beds had

● Six Christchurch psychiatric patients commit suicide in six weeks.

● An Invercargill psychiatric patient, unable to get treatment, becomes involved in an armed confrontation with police and is shot dead.

● A Wellington psychiatric patient gives birth on the roadside only weeks after being discharged from Porirua Hospital.

● The suicide rate for young men has increased by 350 percent over the last 20 years.

● A High Court Judge criticises the government's health policy when sentencing a former psychiatric patient to five years jail

● All round the country former psychiatric patients are crammed into private "rest homes" and hovels as a result of the government's "community care" programme.

Psychiatric patients have become a new source of revenue for private rest homes, while disused hospitals like Christchurch's Templeton Centre are being closed down and sold off.

There is a major crisis in the country's mental health services – and after years of pretending the problem doesn't exist – the government has only recently decided to set up an "inquiry".

And while patients suffer – unit managers in Christchurch mental health services are being given free mystery weekend trips, including a rental car, and have been told to keep these perks confidential.

This is obscene. **BUT**, unfortunately, it is typical of New Zealand's health services today.

closed, he said.

In human terms, the suffering these cutbacks are causing to patients and families is beyond description.

Yet health minister

Shipley has only now asked her officials to "draw up some terms of reference" for an enquiry. This is bureaucratic language for doing very little as slowly as possible.

The Health-For-Profit system

At the same time as tremendous misery is being inflicted on some of society's most vulnerable people – the mentally ill – the private health industry is creaming it in.

The so-called "funder-provider split" means that public health funds are dispensed through the Regional Health Authorities to either private or public hospitals. So increasingly private hospitals are nibbling into the public health dollar – to provide those services which are most profitable. RHA funding is dispensed on an arbitrary basis, so that if a hospital has spent its quota, then theatres close – no matter how many patients are on waiting lists.

And now, public hospitals are to begin admitting private, paying customers. This is yet another step down the slippery road of health privatisation.

The health industry wants everyone to be forced into paying health insurance (ignoring the fact that they are already paying for this in their taxes) and the publicly funded hospitals only there to pick up the more serious cases and those that require costly care and are therefore unprofitable.

The chief administrators of the public health institutions are virtually all business people, skilled in number crunching and screwing greater profits out of workers, but with no experience in running a health service to meet people's needs.

That tells you what kind of health service the Nats are building.

How to beat the health cuts



In September 1989, 2,500 trade unionists swamped a meeting of the former Wellington Area Health Board to protest against planned cuts to services. As a result of this show of force the Board backed down on significant cuts that had been planned.

A number of other mass campaigns since have also scored successes around the country. What is needed at the core of the struggle to save public health is the organised workforce – the people who make the health services work and who can put the strongest pressure on health bosses and government.

Quebec votes to stay -

DYLAN BRAITHWAITE
reports from Ottawa

But bigots take advantage of unrest

THE RESULT of the Canada's referendum on granting independence to the French-speaking province of Quebec showed the narrowest of winning margins to the Federalist side of the debate. The NO side won with just 50.6% of the votes cast, to the YES side's 49.4%.

Rather than being seen as a victory for a united Canada, the result is seen as a moral victory for the separatists, and as forcing federal Canada to deal with the Quebec issue again, and make real changes.

The lead up to the election was dominated by the most amazing propaganda. At first, confident of an easy victory, Prime Minister Chretien told the nation that Canada was the best country in the world, and that Quebec would be tearing a nation apart if it separated.

He went so far as to

argue that there was no poverty or inequality in Canada, and that Canada had always provided social justice to all peoples.

This came at the same time as the Harris Government in Ontario, and the Klein Government in Alberta, have launched savage attacks on the poor, driving thousands of Canadians into grinding poverty.

This rhetoric wore thin on the minds of Quebecers determined to create real change for themselves.

Throughout the campaign the federalist forces used a combination of threats, fear-mongering and cajoling to convince Quebecers that separation was not the solution to their problems.

It was probably this approach more than anything that drove a clear majority of French speaking Quebecers to vote in favour of

separation on the night. The markets, and English and French business interests threatened economic blackmail should Quebec secede. Many French Quebecers were heard to say prior to the night that they feared for their jobs, their house values, and the state of the economy in a sovereign Quebec.

In other words, they feared a backlash from English Canada. This rhetoric also unleashed a wave of rallies and marches of English Canadians imploring Quebec not to secede.

Whilst the nationalism of French Quebecers was well publicised by the English media, and picked up on by these English Canadians, the deeply embedded nationalism of English Canadians was completely ignored.

Unthinking patriotism was seen as the best solution to the fact that

the Federalists were staring down the barrel of a defeat.

Socialists cannot support the nationalism of either side in the debate.

We believe that separation was the most radical move needed to generate real change between English and French Canada, but that Quebec autonomy needs to be seen as a chance for all Canadians to free themselves from the Government attacks that are launching assault after assault on Canada's poor.

Both English and French Canadians need to put nationalism aside, and find ways of uniting to fight this common enemy.

The result of the referendum puts the needs of ordinary Quebecers firmly back in the political limelight, and Federal Canada has no choice now but to address those needs.

Unrest part of
rising struggles
worldwide

More Turkish strikes

A MASSIVE strike by public sector workers in Turkey brought much of the country to a halt in mid-October and contributed to a no-confidence vote for Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's government.

The strike began on September 20 when sugar factory, railway and port workers walked out.

They were joined by 270,000 other public sector workers demanding raises equal to the 70 percent inflation rate and protesting against privatisation, government repression, and attacks on wages and job security.

On October 17 President Suleyman Demirel issued a decree suspending the strike in some government industries, including sugar, claiming they were "disrupting public health and national security." But Demirel's real motive was to stop the loss of \$10 million a day in foreign trade since the strike began.

The same day, 500,000 other workers classified as civil servants hit the picket lines.

They staged a one-day walkout to demand the right to strike and collective bargaining. In all, some 850,000 workers have participated in the strike wave.

"This will be a warning to the next government," said Nerettin Aldemir, general secretary of the Egitim-Sen education union.

March shows bitterness US blacks feel

by Hassan Mahamdallie

THE WORLD press condemned the "Million Man March" on Washington as a triumph for race hatred.

They have scarcely paused to ask why hundreds of thousands of black people supported a march called by Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam.

In truth the marchers were responding to the racism that pervades American society.

While a middle class minority has seen its living standard rise, most blacks are worse off than 15 years ago.

Today inner-city life has worsened, leading to an appalling toll of violence and drugs.

Part of the reason why people are attracted to Farrakhan's call is that traditional civil rights groups have failed to tap that rising bitterness.

The average income of members of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) is \$US 50,000 - way above what most people get.

So Farrakhan has been able to harness the feeling that something should be done about the appalling problems of inner-city life.

But the tragedy is that Farrakhan has little to say about this and other issues.

The idea of black men marching to show a

positive image strikes a real chord when more young black men are in prison than at university.

But Farrakhan's answer, that black men should take responsibility for the problems they suffer, lets the real criminals off the hook.

Right-win politicians like Newt Gingrich are tearing up the welfare system.

They blame unemployment and crime on a "dependency culture" and on black single parents.

The march did not protest against attacks on equal opportunities or cuts in government programmes for the poor.

Because Farrakhan doesn't challenge those who really hold power in the US he falls into a hopeless strategy of attacking other oppressed groups.

His outbursts against Jews and gays have nothing to do with black liberation.

Jews are not responsible for racism, indeed they are victims of it themselves through anti-semitism.

Those who have turned to Farrakhan are rightly desperate for change.

The tragedy is that the Nation of Islam cannot deliver for the majority of blacks, impoverished by US capitalism.

SOCIALISM '95 WELLINGTON Aro Valley Hall December 2 - 3

A weekend of discussion

- The growing anger - building the socialist alternative
- Socialists and women's liberation
- Sack the Nats - how to make a better future (panel debate)
- Why *Socialist Worker* is your paper
- Trotsky's contribution to Marxism
- What is the road to tino rangatiratanga?
- Socialists and the unions
- Overseas speakers invited

Cost \$10 waged, \$5 unwaged. Half-price for one day only. Accommodation included for out-of-towners.

Bus transport from Auckland will pick up in Hamilton, Rotorua and elsewhere. \$40 return. (Please book early.)

Send application for registration to:

**Socialism '95
Box 8851
Auckland**

Right Turn

THE Superannuitants national body has changed its leadership and the new chairman is touring NZ to increase membership.

The main policy point being stressed is "We want to get away from the confrontation approach - let's get down to negotiations instead. All the confrontation hype of big meetings didn't get us anywhere."

At one of his meetings, attended by 500 people, a speaker from the floor requested he "revise his thinking" in the light of one experience on Auckland's North Shore, when Helen Clark and Harold Titter planned to close the Accident & Emergency Department at North Shore Hospital.

When over 500, mainly elderly people, demonstrated outside the hospital this plan was reversed.

The same could be said about other attempted closures of NZ hospitals.

Superannuitants National Chairman McKenzie also stated: "We should learn the lessons from the Business RoundTable -

they have succeeded in getting government to implement 71 of their 75 policy points."

Someone from the audience interjected with: "Yes, but they've got the money."

His reply was: "Correct - but we've got the numbers."

What we need is corporate funding," he concluded. How long will we have the numbers with conservative attitudes like that?

Disgruntled
Superannuitant
Auckland

TIMOR VIGILS

As part of world-wide actions in support of Timor independence, a series of candlelight vigils will be held in Auckland from November 11 to December 7.

November 12 is the 4th anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili. December 7 is the 20th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion.

**QEI Square (Downtown)
Friday November 17
Friday November 24
Thursday December 7**

5 pm to 8 pm

letters to the editor

Agree? Disagree? Send a letter to: *Socialist Worker*, PO Box 8851, Auckland. Keep them brief, please.



Prisoners of debt

A VERY good friend of mine recently received a nasty letter from Baycorp Collection Agency for a debt to Income Support Services he did not owe and had never been billed for.

The letter (which went to the wrong address) warned him of possible legal action and damage his credit rating.

Over the past months this person has found himself heavily dealt to by two creditors the moment

his accounts showed as being a measly few days overdue according to their records.

One of these companies had, without consultation, arbitrarily altered the due date, causing their computer to show the account as overdue when in fact it wasn't, then add a \$10 "collection fee" to the account for the privilege!

Another friend was denied credit because she was listed as a bad risk for an unsolicited item she received in the mail and refused to pay for.

Seemingly it is not against the law of this land for credit agencies to label innocent people as bad credit risks.

This is nothing short of slander directed at working class people in a manner that denies them access to the necessities of life unless they have ready cash to pay for them.

How many workers or beneficiaries have a grand or two sitting in the bank to replace worn out commodities.

Know any? I don't.

LH
Wellington

Support Gay Oakes

Gay Oakes was convicted of murder after she gave sleeping tablets to her drunk former husband out of fear for her safety and that of her family.

She has been adamant that she never intended to kill him - but in spite of the evidence of his past violent behaviour and the affect of this on Gay and her children, she was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Gay Oakes campaign is continuing to press for Gay to be recognised as suffering from Battered Wife Syndrome and that she was not responsible for her actions the night her husband died. This is something the trial judge and jury refused to accept.

The Gay Oakes Supporters Committee is intending to challenge a Parole Board decision not to give Gay early parole. It is also gathering more information on BWS from overseas sources.

In the meantime there has been another case of a man being found guilty of

manslaughter (not murder which carries a mandatory life sentence) for killing his partner. Once again the partner was found to have "provoked" the attack through things she said.

This "provocation" pales into insignificance compared with the 11 years of beatings that Gay endured.

The Gay Oakes Supporters are urging people to keep writing to Gay. There has been a fall-off in mail recently, and this flow of outside contact is important both for Gay's morale and also to show the authorities that she has not been forgotten.

Donations of money or phone cards would also be appreciated (as she needs these to communicate with the outside world). If you send money please indicate in a letter how much - to make sure it all gets there.

Gay can be contacted at:

Private Bag 4702
Christchurch

The wine box tax scandal – it's time to make the rich pay

SINCE 1984 Labour and National governments have repeatedly told us that 'we' can no longer afford the welfare state. They have cut spending on health, housing education and welfare in order to fund massive tax cuts for the rich. New Zealand now has amongst the lowest rates of tax on corporate profits and high incomes in the advanced capitalist world.

Business leaders like Doug Myers, Paul Collins and Michael Fay have urged Labour and National to cut welfare benefits and housing support for the poor. Not content with the tax cuts already introduced they want more. In the meantime their companies have avoided paying tax on a massive scale.

The Wine-Box Inquiry is raking over what is probably the biggest, dirtiest and most significant political scandal in New Zealand's history. At the centre of the Inquiry is something that is at the heart of the capitalist system – capitalists and their political allies ripping of workers and the poor.

The Wine Box Tax Scandal goes right to the guts of the Nat's entire anti-working class agenda. It shows that all the arguments about not being able to afford to maintain the welfare state are complete bullshit. If the government can afford to let the Inland Revenue grant massive tax credits to New Zealand's biggest companies controlled by New Zealand's richest men, then it can sure as hell afford to provide decent housing, health care, education and income support for those who need it.

BRIAN ROPER investigates.

How the rich avoid paying tax

AS WORKERS we have to pay at least 24% of our total gross wages or salaries in tax. The minimum tax rate on low income earners was raised by the last Labour Government from 14 to 24 cents in the dollar. This is deducted directly through Pay-As-You-Earn.

By contrast, since 1984 New Zealand's richest individuals and their companies have been able to avoid paying tax on a huge scale. They have been able to do this by using subsidiary paper companies – supposedly with a legitimate commercial purpose apart from tax avoidance – in tax havens (also known as international financial secrecy centres), such as the Cook Islands. This then enables them to avoid paying tax in New Zealand.

Very simply the tax scams can work as follows. A big New Zealand company has a subsidiary company which is based in the Cook Islands and operates under Cook Island law. The subsidiary company pays tax to the Cook Islands government and then gets this back via a series of complex and highly secret financial transactions.

The company then receives a certificate from the Cook Islands government saying that it has paid, lets say, \$10 million in tax. Companies based in New Zealand do not have to pay tax on the profits of their overseas subsidiaries if they have already paid tax in those countries. So, in this example, the big NZ company with the Cook Islands subsidiary company has legally avoided paying \$10 million of tax on its consolidated profits in New Zealand.

Another scam is to use these subsidiary companies to generate 'paper losses' which reduce the amount of profit that the company has to pay tax on. This can be done without breaking NZ tax law and without requiring any direct corruption.



Tax avoidance – the facts

- IN 1995, **Doug Myers**, who is chairman of the right-wing Business Roundtable, is declared New Zealand's richest man by the *National Business Review* with a personal fortune of \$275 million. He owned 31% of the shares in **Lion Nathan** in 1994. According to the *New Zealand Company Register* (NZCR) between 1992 and 1995, Lion Nathan has made \$685.9 million dollars net profit (vol.33, p.65; ODT for 1995). During the same period – it has received \$41.88 million dollars of tax credits from the Inland Revenue Department!!!
- The next two richest individuals on the *National Business Review's* 1995 rich list are **Michael Fay** and **David Richwhite**. Their personal fortunes were estimated at \$225 million each or \$450 million between them. According to the NZCR, from 1986 to 1993 their company – Fay Richwhite & Company Ltd – paid \$10.6 million tax while accumulating net profits of \$192.76 million.
- Between 1990 and 1994 NZ's largest company – **Fletcher Challenge Ltd** – accumulated \$2091 million or 2 billion of net profit. During the same period it received a balance of \$189 million dollars in tax credit from the IRD – that is, according to the NZCR, Fletcher Challenge's IRD tax credits exceeded the amount of tax paid during this period.
- During the same period (1990-94), another corporate giant – **Brierley Investments Ltd** – made \$1183 million of net profit. On this massive profit it paid a mere \$89.77 million in tax.
- According to the Treasury – hardly a radical source – overall company tax payments as a ratio of operating surplus (an official statistical measure of profit) was a mere **7.6% in 1990-91** and **10.6% in 1993-94** (B.6.A 1994:113).

Wine Box Tax Scandal raises key issues

■ **SCALE OF tax avoidance** – the Inland Revenue has assessed the best part of \$500 million potential tax revenue lost because NZ's biggest companies have avoided paying tax. This is just the 'tip of the iceberg'.

■ **Hypocrisy of the rich** – the very same individuals who have been pushing the anti-working class New Right agenda have been avoiding paying tax on a grand scale. They say that the state must cut spending on welfare but are quite happy for their companies to receive big handouts in the form of tax credits.

■ **Bias of the legal system** – the Wine-Box inquiry shows that the whole legal system is biased in favour of the rich. The tax dodge designer – European Pacific – has spent over a million dollars in the courts to suppress stories in *The Independent* and *National Business Review* as well as to keep the *Frontline* documentary on the scandal off the air. NZ's largest corporations have used the courts to suppress what should be public information.

■ **Bias of the media** – the mainstream media have done everything they can to play down the extent and significance of the scandal. TVNZ journalist, Ian Wishart has alleged that TVNZ chairman Norman Geary, who has also been on the board of Brierley Investments Limited, tried to interfere with the *Frontline* documentary on the tax scandal.

■ **Business funding of the major parties** – big companies regularly make big undisclosed donations to Labour and National.

■ **Lack of political action by the major parties to stem tax avoidance** – neither Labour or National in government or in opposition, have made serious attempts to reduce the scale of corporate tax avoidance. Both political parties have done everything they can to divert public attention away from the fact that the rich are avoiding paying tax on a large scale.

■ **What's the Alliance doing?** – even the Alliance has done little to put the Great Tax Scandal on the public agenda.

■ **Failure of the IRD to collect revenue from rich** – the Inland Revenue Department and the Serious Fraud office have both failed to ensure that New Zealand's major companies pay 33% of their gross profits in tax (which is the official rate).

■ **Undermines Nat's agenda** – the Wine-Box Tax Scandal has the potential to undermine the Nat's current right-wing agenda. The Nats want to take from the poor in order to give even more to the rich. But how long are workers, welfare beneficiaries, students, users of the health system, and state housing tenants going to put up with real wage cuts, benefit cuts, fee rises, health cuts and rent rises when it becomes clear that every dollar the government 'saves' is going to make rich bludgers even richer?

■ **System is based on exploitation** – the Wine-Box Tax Scandal shows clearly the whole capitalist system is geared around the exploitation of the working class majority by a tiny capitalist minority. The media, Labour and National parties, the IRD, the Courts all act to maintain the continued rule of the capitalist class.

Socialism

Capitalism is a system of exploitation which generates inequality, crisis and war.

Although workers create society's wealth, it is controlled by the ruling class for its own selfish ends.

Socialism can only be built when the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plans its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits. This will eliminate all class divisions in society.

Stalinist countries such as China and Cuba, just like the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, have nothing to do with socialism. They are state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers against every dictatorial stalinist ruling class.

Revolution not reformism

The present system cannot be reformed to end exploitation and oppression, contrary to what Alliance, Labour and union leaders claim. It must be overthrown by the working class.

Capitalism's parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class. These institutions cannot be taken over and used by the working class.



**where
we
stand**

To pave the way to socialism the working class needs a new kind of state – a democratic workers state based on workers councils and workers militia.

Internationalism

Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is global.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We fight racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support all genuine national liberation struggles.

We are internationalists because socialism depends on spreading working class revolutions around the world.

Liberation from oppression

We fight for democratic rights. We oppose the oppression of women, Maori, Pacific Islanders, lesbians and gays.

All forms of oppression are used to divide the working class.

We support the right

of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence. Their liberation is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

Tino rangatiratanga

We support the struggle for Maori self determination.

The government's approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Maori elite while doing little for working class Maori.

Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers state.

Revolutionary party

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary socialist party.

We are in the early stages of building such a party through involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers and the oppressed.

The Socialist Workers Organisation must grow in size and influence to provide leadership in the struggle for working class self-emancipation.

We need to revitalise the unions with a rank-and-file movement.

If you like our ideas and want to fight for socialism, then join us.

Socialist Worker \$8,000 End of year appeal

The *Socialist Worker* appeal for \$8,000 begins this issue and will carry on into March next year.

This is to help meet the difference between sales revenue and production costs, and to help us advance to a tabloid format in the new year.

The next issue of *Socialist Worker* will be the last for 1995.

Donations should be sent to:

**Box 8851
Auckland**

List 1

AUCKLAND:

Jim \$50, DP \$50, PA \$5

Total: \$105.00

CHRISTCHURCH:

8r Mtg \$10, GY \$10, KM \$7, Lyt Pubs \$5, RB \$30, East Timor Protest 15c, Temp. Hosp. Mtg \$2, JAD \$20.

Total \$84.15

OTHER:

HB \$10.

This week's total: \$199.15

SWO branch meetings – all welcome

AUCKLAND 7.30 pm every Tuesday at the Socialist Centre, 86 Princes St, Onehunga. Phone 634 3984.

☐ November 14 **The rule of law – are some more equal than others?**

☐ November 21 **Video and social**

WAIKATO 7pm every second Tuesday at the Student Union Building, Waikato University, Hamilton. Phone Ross in Hamilton 847 6302 or Karl in Huntly 828 9471.

☐ Next meeting November 21.

TIMBERLANDS 7 pm every second Tuesday at Apumoana marae, Tarawera Rd. Phone Bernie 345 9853 or Martial 357 4536 in Rotorua.

☐ November 14 **The sale of cutting rights at Kaingaroa**

WELLINGTON 7.45 pm every second Wednesday at the meeting hall behind St Peters church, Cnr Guzhnee & Victoria streets. Phone Gordon 387 7380.

☐ November 15 **Trade unions and politics**

☐ November 22 **Will the Alliance fight for your vote?**

Paper sales 12 noon to 1.30pm every Thursday at Manners Mall.

CHRISTCHURCH 7.30 pm every second Sunday at the WEA, 59 Gloucester St. Phone Roy 384 4681.

☐ November 26 **Details to be announced**

DUNEDIN 7.30pm every Thursday at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Building, 362 Lower Moray Place (opposite Countdown goods entrance – next to Sportsworld). Phone Brian or Laurel 473 6047.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- ☐ November 16 **Socialist Worker Public Meeting: Why is National still popular?**
- ☐ November 23 **To be announced**

OTHER AREAS The Socialist Workers Organisation also has members and supporters in North Shore, Paeroa, Napier, Kawerau, Raglan, Palmerston North, Timaru and the West Coast. They can be contacted via the Socialist Centre in Auckland (09) 634 3984.

International Socialists in Australia can be contacted at PO Box A338, Sydney South 2000. Ph 261 4862.

join the socialists

- ☐ I want to join the Socialist Workers Organisation
- ☐ I want more information about membership

Name

Address

Phone

Union/campus

Send to: SWO, PO Box 8851, Auckland

**"Philosophers
have merely
interpreted
the world.
The point is
to change it."
— Karl Marx**

Migrants are welcome here!

ACCORDING TO a recent National Business Review Consultants Poll, Pacific Islanders and Asian immigrants are not wanted in New Zealand.

The nationwide survey, published late last month, revealed that 57 percent of those polled believed that there were too many Pacific Islanders in the country, while 51 percent of those surveyed thought that there were too many Asian migrants.

The survey noted that opposition to Pacific Island immigrants was the highest among retired people (64 percent) and those on low incomes (62 percent). While concern about Asian immigration was strongest among those aged 18 to 24 years and those aged over 60 (57 percent respectively).

What do these specific groups have in common? They've all been hammered by successive right wing governments over the last eleven years. It's no accident that these groups face a rather bleak future benefit cuts, rapidly declining employment prospects, falling wages and worsening conditions, cuts to superannuation and so forth.

One of the classic ways bosses (and the capitalist system that ensures their continued wealth and dominance) diverts attention away from the self-destructing and crisis-ridden system, is to divide the one group that is capable of putting an end to the misery that the majority of ordinary working people and beneficiaries continue to experience. This divide and rule strategy is enforced principally by turning one group of workers against another. This in turn is fuelled by the litany of lies about women, gay and lesbians, ethnic minority and immigrants.

One of the most common arguments that is used to generate a sense of panic about incoming migrants to NZ, is that their arrival signifies the start of the "Asian Invasion" and the "flood" of Pacific Islanders entering the country taking jobs, much needed resources, and scrounging benefits funded by the NZ taxpayer. This has led to calls by politicians such as National MP Nick Smith for far tougher immigration policies. Underlying their fears is two beliefs: first that immigration costs jobs and, second, that increased immigration would contribute to a substantial worsening of the quality of life in NZ and provoke deteriorating race-relations.

It is important to note that even with completely open borders it would be unlikely to lead to millions of people suddenly deciding to uproot themselves and migrate to NZ. Emigration

is a step usually taken as a last resort by many: it signifies that economic and social conditions are so bad in their home countries that they are willing to bid farewell to their friends and family and take themselves to a foreign continent where the culture, language and mode of life may be completely unfamiliar. This is why the vast majority of the world's peoples try to make the best of their situation where they are.

Leaving aside the nonsense that Asian or Pacific Island migrants have any idea of taking over NZ, a look at the official immigration statistics shows what a load of bullshit arguments about a Pacific Island and Asian invasion really is.

Indeed, through the post-war decades, the vast majority of immigrants were white Europeans. Of the 57,257 migrants in 1994, 49 percent were from Australia, United Kingdom, US and Canada. Migrants from Asia made up 19% and migrants from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Western Samoa only 4 percent! This makes the argument that we are being invaded by Asians and Pacific Islanders simply absurd.

Does immigration cost jobs?

The idea that immigrants will "take over jobs" has been around for along time. Historically, there has been explicit racist element to this argument - the belief that immigrants will work for pittance make "bad unionists", and will undermine jobs and conditions for Pakeha New Zealanders. However, even without this component, many sincere racists may still believe that there are "only so many jobs go around", and that the arrival of large numbers of people of whatever their ethnic background will mean longer dole queues.

Closer inspection of the evidence reveals that this argument does not stand up to scrutiny, indeed, immigration either creates jobs or, at the very least, has no detrimental impact.

Indeed, even in countries like Australia, where immigration occurs on a larger scale, there is little evidence to support the view that recent migrants have added to the level of unemployment. Why is this? Every extra pair of hands available for work is another mouth to feed. Immigrants need housing, food and clothing. They need transport, education, furniture and household goods. And of course, many bring money with them to buy these things. Many immigrants are in their 20s or 30s (in 1994 60.9 percent of permanent migrants who arrived in NZ were under the age of 30 years) and bring with them valuable skills for which they were trained in

Give credit where it's due

Here's an easy one you.

What's more precious than a mother's smile, and more full of promise than the first golden sunrise of spring?

What's the one thing worth defending and protecting while our schools fall into disrepair and our health services and hospitals fail to cope?

You got it - New Zealand's credit rating for foreign debt.

Economists are very excited right now because the news on the rating is all good. The power who decides if countries are an o.k risk for a loan, international rating agency Standard & Poors, is having a think about bumping our rating up a notch. You might remember the great day last year when the rating improved from AA- to AA. Well, if we play our cards right, it might go up even further.

"Popular support for current fiscal policies, if sustained could lead to a positive outlook on the foreign policy currency debt rating in the run up to the next election due by November 1996", Standard and Poors say.

Or, in plainer language, if the government get an easy ride through to the end of next year, and is elected to carry on the same policies as they're using now, then we're in with a chance of becoming AA+ or even AAA!

If that happens then foreign money lenders will take more interest in NZ, while all of us here, from the governor of the Reserve Bank to the kids on the checkout at Dekka will be able to bask in the glory of living in one of the world's higher credit rated countries.

However, like all important sounding things, a higher credit rating comes with a price tag. "Popular support for current fiscal policies" means no fooling around with Employment Contracts Act, and no big strikes for higher wages. If we really want to see that rating up there we have to accept the state house market rents policy. We have to lie back and enjoy the health reforms, and we should also set up a few more food banks.

A high credit rating is a fragile flower and almost anything could harm it; even things that don't look dangerous. Westpac economist Jocelyn Stroombergen warns that:

"Alternative budgets such as that of the Alliance and Labour represent a risk to the rating."

So, ideally, these parties should not produce alternative budgets before the election. To be really on the safe side they should confine their political comments to expressions of praise for the governments policies.

It goes without saying that anything more radical than an Alliance or Labour alternative

budget would be completely beyond the pale, and the best guarantee of a AA+ rating would seem to blind faith in National and complete submission to their every whim and fancy. That's the way to ensure a higher foreign credit rating.

But if you prefer to go for a decent wage rise and chuck out this worker bashing government and its ECA then we'd best tell them to stick their credit rating where the monkey stuck his nuts.



their homelands: NZ business gets the use of them without contributing anything to their costs.

Scapegoating

The trouble with the argument that immigration costs jobs is that it identifies foreign workers as the problem: allegedly, it is foreigners who take jobs, not the Government, Telecom, Lion Nathan or Fletcher Challenge.

It leads to the idea that NZ workers and the union movement should look to controlling foreign workers rather than the job-slashing activities of NZ business. This inevitably leads to scapegoating and the growth of racism in the labour movement, sometimes with tragic consequences as workers are set against each other.

The reality is unemployment in NZ is absolutely built into our capitalist system. Each successive recession is generating higher unemployment than the one before, and each economic recovery cuts it by less.

Pointing the finger at immigrants only weakens our ability to tackle the real cause of unemployment: the

insatiable drive for profits by Government and big business at the expense of human livelihoods.

Boom/bust cycle

When capitalism is in boom and capitalists are falling over themselves to expand their is usually a labour shortage. This is overcome by drawing people into the labour force from wherever there is a cheap and convenient supply, particularly women, who had previously been confined to the household, people from rural areas and immigrants from poorer countries. When the boom turns to slump nothing suits the system better than to be able to treat these workers as "surplus to requirements" and to suggest they are responsible for the crisis.

This is of course exactly what happened in Aotearoa during the post-war long boom with the expansion of the manufacturing industry. A shortage of labour developed with the result that capitalists tried what ever they could to get cheap, convenient supply of labour.

This they got from two sources: the first from a reservoir of Maori labour from the declining rural areas; and sec-

ond from overseas immigrants - particularly Pacific Islanders who were encouraged by government assisted policies to settle in Aotearoa. Indeed, in 1945 there were just over 2,000 Pacific Islanders in NZ; by 1956 this figure had quadrupled.

Twenty years later there were almost 66,000 Pacific Islanders born or settled in NZ, (and by 1986 the numbers had almost doubled to 128,000). With the collapse of the long boom in the early 1970s, Pacific Islanders became a scapegoat for the system with the infamous "overstayer" campaign which saw Pacific Islanders (and Maori) harassed by the police with dawn raids on the homes of supposed over-stayers.

Internationalism

It is absolutely crucial that we reject this logic. We must not approach this question from the standpoint of a particular capitalist state, but from the standpoint of the interests of the international working class. These are best served by the free movement of workers around the globe.

The Road to October

THERE WERE two revolutions in Russia in 1917. The first occurred in February. The Tsar's regime had lost the support of virtually the whole population, and 'was overthrown by an uprising of workers, peasants and soldiers. Even many from the privileged classes wanted the Tsar to go.

Tired of the brutal realities of World War I and the widespread corruption amongst officials of the ruling class, the Russian people demanded a new society. However the unity of purpose they may have felt in dumping an unpopular monarch was shortlived.

Provisional Government

The February Revolution of 1917 led to the formation of a Provisional Government dominated by liberals and moderate socialists. For Kerensky, the new premier of the provisional government, the aim was the kind of society we have in New Zealand today. Let the Russian people vote for whoever they want. Let them have their toothless parliaments. The real power would continue to rest with those who were born to wealth and privilege.

Kerensky wanted to make Russia safe for employers to make their profits. But there was no way the women textile workers who had sparked the February revolution could identify with the hopes of their boss. There was no way peasants could share the aims of their landlords who had bled their families dry for years. Indeed, it seemed the whole world was being turned upside down, yet the lives of workers and peasants remained much the same. They hadn't fought and died to suffer more of the same under a different name.

Whereas the moderate socialists (Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks) agreed that the Provisional Government had a right to rule, Lenin and the Bolsheviks advocated opposition

to the Provisional Government. They pushed for all power to the soviets, an end to the war and all land to the peasants. This was to strike a chord with ordinary workers and peasants in the following months with overwhelming support throughout the country. The Bolshevik Party grew tremendously in this period.

Uneasy balance

For months there was an uneasy balance of power in Russia.

First the huge workers' demonstrations and strikes would paralyse the government. Then that same government would be prodded by the bosses into putting the workers in their place with gun and baton. Victory had to fall to one side or the other.

In October, the breaking point came. Kerensky's government was by now totally discredited. It was incapable of giving the vast majority of the population – the workers and peasants – what they wanted. Instead of peace, it gave them fine words about fighting on until the war was won. Instead of bread, it gave them continued hunger. Instead of land, it gave them the landlords' rack-renting bailiffs. Kerensky's attempt to suppress the Petrograd Soviet by using military power was the last straw.

October Revolution

The Bolsheviks took power on 25 October/7 November 1917. The government which took power through the revolution was a kind of the world had never seen before – a workers' socialist state.

The Russian Revolution brought to power a much more mature, better organised and politically conscious working class. Never before had the working class become the ruling class of a great country, fighting tenaciously and heroically against enemies at home and against foreign armies. Never before had



Lenin

such radical changes in social structure been carried out in so short a time. Semi-feudal social relations of land ownership were swept away far more radically than even in the French Revolution of 1789.

Legislation

From the offices of the Bolsheviks who formed the first Soviet government poured decree after decree. They announced workers' control of the factories (practically all the factories, mines and other valuable natural resources of the country were taken over by the new workers' state), they abolished the death penalty, they announced the separation of state and education from the church, and they announced full freedom of religion – ending the anti-semitic terror which had ruled Russia for hundreds of years. They embarked on a great experiment in education, ending the dictatorship of the teacher. They launched a mass campaign to teach reading and writing to the millions of illiterate people in Russia. They swept away the degrading legislation which had crushed women for centuries. Marriages could be dissolved by either partner. Children born out of wedlock were given equal rights with the children of married parents. They announced the provision of free abortion on demand. The new laws emphasised the full equality of men and women. Adultery and homosexuality were dropped

from the criminal code.

And to spell out that these weren't just the empty promises of a self-seeking elite, they announced that government officials would be paid the average wage of a skilled industrial worker.

Workers' democracy

The dream of generations of socialists had come true. The working people had overthrown the old ruling class and held power through their own workers' governments, the Soviets.

These were based in workplaces – every workplace in a locality would elect delegates to form local soviets. At the level below this each of those workplaces would have its own factory or local workplace council of delegates elected from the shop floor. Above this each local workers' council sent delegates to a national congress of soviets.

Every delegate to the soviets were elected, but also subject to instant recall.

In this way working people could exert control over national decision-making bodies on a day-to-day basis after October 1917 in a way that has never been possible in capitalist societies.

Hope was in the air. But people do not, unfortunately, make history in circumstances of their own choosing...CONTINUED.

Next issue "How the revolution was lost?"

A LOT of people who don't want to believe that working people can control their own lives try to convince us that the revolution in Russia was nothing like this.

They never mention the torrent of debate and argument, the flood of newspapers, the active democracy of the revolution in ferment. They paint a very different picture, with Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik dark, conspiratorial villains plotting in secret to seize power. This is sheer nonsense. The Bolsheviks formed the new Soviet government because they had proved over twenty long years of struggle that they were the best fighters against the rotten Tsarist regime.

Just before the October revolution, the Bolshevik won a majority in the Soviets. So it was with the support of virtually the whole working class that they mounted the insurrection which toppled the bankrupt Kerensky regime. Little wonder the old system went down like a pack of cards. So bloodless was the insurrection that more people died in the making of Eisenstein's silent film about it than died in the real thing!

A moderate socialist called Martov, who opposed the insurrection, wrote at the time:

'Understand, please, what we have before us after all is a victorious uprising of the proletariat – almost the entire proletariat supports Lenin and expects its social liberation from the uprising.'

The Bolshevik Party in July had 176,000 members. And these weren't the passive card-holders you get in the Labour Party or the Alliance. They were active party members. When you think that there were just three million workers in the towns you can imagine the enormous support it had. By the time the Bolsheviks came to form the first soviet government, something like one worker in every ten was a member of the Bolsheviks.

A temple where the money-lenders conduct the ceremonies

— by Barry Brown

A COUPLE of months ago a five-part series, *The Death Of Yugoslavia*, was shown on BBC television. Last month it was on Australian television, acclaimed by reviewers. Its first episode was about Slobodan Milosevic's rise to power in Serbia.

Amateur good, professional bad?

IN OCCUPIED France during the Second World War, the puppet Vichy Government decided that professional sport had contributed to what it saw as France's "decadence" during the 1930s.

The Vichy sports department drew up plans to make all sport non-professional, including soccer, cycling and tennis, within ten years.

Rugby league, however, which was deemed to be merely a professional version of rugby union, was banned immediately.

Its funds were confiscated and its players made to play union.

Socialists sickened by the way sport is increasingly being divided up into the corporate-box set and the crowd on the terraces, into those TV viewers who can afford Sky and those who wait for the delayed-broadcast (if they're lucky) on TVNZ/TV3, may fall into the trap of defending amateur sport against professional rather than debating sport in a socialist society and sport in a capitalist.

To argue amateur good, professional bad, could see you in some very odd company.

Let me quote from Chris Harman's review of it in the *British Socialist Worker*:

"Socialists are often accused of holding absurd conspiracy theories when we say ruling class politicians play up ethnic hatreds in order to bolster their own positions. But this programme was a case study of precisely such behaviour.

"It began with footage of Milosevic attempting to address a discontented crowd of Serbs from the southern, majority Albanian speaking, region of Kosovo in 1987.

"They reacted to his platitudes about how wonderful life was in the existing Yugoslav state with cat-

calls and shouts that they had heard it all before.

"Milosevic saw his career in tatters, the discredited leader of a hated regime. Fellow leaders of the then ruling Communist Party went on to describe how he set out to restore his fortunes.

"He returned to Kosovo to speak to another Serb rally, where a carefully planned conflict took place between local Serbs and Albanian-speaking police.

"This time his message was that the local Serbs were suffering unbearable oppression at the hands of the local Albanian-speaking Party leadership.

"Suddenly the hated representative of the old order was a national hero...

Milosevic's rivals cringed in the face of the nationalist tide and opportunist politicians, enterprise bosses and journalists jumped on his bandwagon..."

Now to most New Zealanders, this would come as a revelation. But we won't be given the chance.

TVNZ had the chance to buy the series but decided it wouldn't rate. Similarly the extraordinary archive film of the Anglo-Russian documentary series *Blood Upon The Snow* has been dumped on TVNZ's barely-watched "community" channels, channels set up to thwart any local challenge to TVNZ dominance.

It's all part of the



Slobodan Milosevic

dumbing down of our television ever since the Lange/Douglas vandals decided the money-lenders shouldn't just be allowed into the Temple, they should run the ceremonies.

Television, like health and education, is too important to be left to the greasy fingers of the accountants who use it as though it were a till.

Storms in the art galleries

LAST WEEK'S *Sunday Star/Times* carried two finger-wagging columns about art. First, writing about the removal of Diane Prince's New Zealand flag from the Korurangi New Maori Art exhibition at the Auckland New Gallery (the flag, part of a pathway of arranged stones, wood, feathers and a kit, was fastened to the floor with "Please walk on me" inscribed upon it).

Art critic Keith Stewart wrote, "... by sloganising and not making art, Diane Prince misses an opportunity to reclaim mana for Maori through building status for an ancient and diverse artistic tradition that is one of the key elements of our national culture. Surely as an artist that should be her primary role."

Well, no. Surely that shouldn't be an artist's primary role. That's the role of an art

critic. What an artist does is to relate what she sees, what she feels. If the artist connects with the viewer, the art works.

How you could expect to walk into an exhibition of "New Maori Art" without seeing anger is beyond me. And anger is not a subtle emotion.

Sure, the consciously political bit of a work of art is what everyone's forgotten in fifty years time. But there's room for the day-to-day (after all, it's where we live most of the time) and the censorship of Prince's flag is an ironic example of art at work: the power of symbols.

Second, celebrated col-

umnist Frank Haden, writing of the Robert Mapplethorpe photo exhibition heading for Wellington next month, describes it as "a collection of dirty pictures by one of the century's appalling scumbags". Unlike MP Graham Lee's moral outrage crowd, Haden doesn't want the exhibition stopped. Instead, he picks a quarrel with "easily-led art experts who have elevated this despicable fellow (Mapplethorpe) to the level of a creative artist... A photographer, no matter how skilful, creates nothing... An artist in the grand sense is a person who creates something new, something

inspiring, that wasn't there before."

Again, no. An artist creates something new in the viewer, not in the view-finder.

Frank Haden, like Robert Mapplethorpe, was raised a Catholic. That is to say, he was brought up on casual images of semi-nude bodies brutalised and degraded—and sanctified. If Haden were true to himself, he would admit that these images become entangled in one's awakening sexuality and to see the mix stunningly embalmed on gallery walls is to have your breath taken away.

He might go further and start reading Simone De Beauvoir and Angela Carter who argued that sado-masochism is natural under capitalism. However Frank Haden, a former editor of the *Auckland Star* and deputy editor of the *Dominion*, is unlikely to do this as Frank Haden is quite simply a bigot.



CHOGM: Auckland's week of protest

THE COMMONWEALTH heads of Government meeting has been target of relatively small but widely focused protests.

The CHOGM Action Coalition called a number of protests aimed primarily at drawing international attention to social problems in New Zealand and the grievances of Maori.

CAC leaflets pointed out that the National Government would be using CHOGM as a opportunity to grandstand to the world and "boast about the supposed success of their economic restructuring."

"We want to tell the people of the Commonwealth that all is not well in Aotearoa."

CAC protests began on Wednesday November 8, when 200 people defied a police ban to march on the streets surrounding the Aotea centre and Aotea Square. The centre and square were barricaded from public access and guarded by a huge police force. The march was subjected to continual police harassment, with numerous attempt to put people

off the street and onto the footpath.

After circling the area, the march stopped in the intersection facing Aotea Square, with many sitting in the roadway while a street theatre performed. The numbers were swelled by onlookers and AIT students who had been outside their nearby campus building.

Police built up their numbers and then demanded people move off the street or face arrest. In front of a flurry of TV and press cameras the police then pushed the protest back, arresting 14 people. While the international media attention discouraged the use of their long batons, the police dragged seated protesters off the road with painful neck and wrist holds.

At almost the same time a dozen members and supporters of Information on Ireland occupied the British Consulate in Auckland for half an hour before be-



Tahitian independence leader Oscar Temaru addresses "Major Outrage" rally

ing evicted by a large contingent of police. They distributed leaflets drawing attention to the British Government's refusal to release Irish political prisoners and to take real steps to allow self-determination for the Irish people.

Next morning police prevented a CAC march of 120 from taking to the street, but were unable to prevent protesters from reforming at the Court where those arrested were appearing, and then marching downtown to join the anti-nuclear rally.

The largest CHOGM protest action was the 3,000 strong rally in downtown Auckland, aimed at British Prime Minister John Major who has declared his support for French nuclear testing. Speakers from parliamentary political parties, the Council of Trade Unions, a visiting South African

Trade Union leader and local Maori were interspersed with music and singing.

Later that day 60 people rallied in front of Aotea Square for another CHOGM Action Coalition protest. The police firstly forced the protest off the road and then demanded they move on because they were obstructing the footpath (even though there were very few passersby at that time in the early evening).

On the Friday morning several groups converged on the area to protest. 80 took part in a CAC protest, and were joined by a contingent of Maori activists. 80 members of the Tamil community rallied to protest against atrocities committed by the Sri Lankan regime against Tamils in Jaffna where an independence struggle has been waging for many years.

A small Greenpeace group abseiled down a nearby building to unfurl a large anti-nuclear banner.

Later in the morning the city's Sikh and Kashmiri communities joined forces to protest against the "fascist state" in India. The marchers wanted to show support for an independent foreign state of Kashmir and to support Kashmiri independence.

Further protests were scheduled for Friday evening and Monday.



PROTESTERS EYEBALL police in Rotorua at the start of the Queen's visit to New Zealand.

100 people demanding the crown honour the Waitangi Treaty and return Maori land marched to Whakarewarewa where the Queen was being welcomed, on November 2. The chants of the crowd could be heard inside, despite the large number of police trying to keep the protest well back.

Protesters also demanded the freeing of Maori activists Ken Mair - who was sentenced to 21 days jail for trying to say a karakia (prayer) in a Wanganui Courtroom. Mair has since been released after a week.

Other placards focused on government plans to sell cutting rights to Kaingaroa forests.

Stop these executions

THE NIGERIAN military regime has confirmed death sentences imposed on nine political opponents, and Amnesty International is launching an urgent appeal for telegrams/faxes/airmail letters to be sent to Nigerian authorities expressing concern at the death sentences and appealing for them not to be carried out.

The 9 men were convicted of murder on October 30 and 31 after grossly unfair and politically motivated trials. They have no right of appeal. Among them is well known writer and environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Messages can be sent to:

Prof. Jonathan O. Ndagi, Nigerian High Commissioner, PO Box 241, Civic Square, Canberra ACT 2608, AUSTRALIA Fax 00-61-6-286-5332

WHERE'S THE ACTION?

ON 2 September 1994 CTU president Ken Douglas advocated a combined trade union campaign to fight for big pay rises.

He said unions should break the law if necessary to obtain the contracts they want.

But no observable practical steps have yet been taken by the head of the Council of Trade Unions to mobilise workers around a united pay campaign.

Dating from his speech, there's still

**no action
from Ken after
437 days**

Meeting pledges to fight Kingseat sale

"YOU CAN stop Kingseat being sold. You must not let this asset be stolen!" was the emphatic declaration by Peter Williams QC to more than 300 residents, nurses, ex-patients and supporters who packed the Hawkins Centre in Papakura on November 8.

The meeting was in response to the announcement that Kingseat psychiatric hospital was to close soon and that the South Auckland RHA already has government permission to sell it.

Co-organiser of the meeting, NZ First associate health spokeswoman Patra de Coudray read from a glossy real estate brochure promoting Kingseat as "the Grand Estate" - with great potential and handy to Auckland city etc.

de Coudray read South Auckland CHE boss Dr Lester Levy's written statement in his absence.

Levy confirmed the CHE's support for selling Kingseat and replacing the 55 bed acute ward with a 45 bed unit at Middlemore.

de Coudray demanded

a moratorium on the sale of Kingseat, and that some of the government's budget surplus be spent on developing mental health facilities around NZ.

Warren Kidd, National MP for Hauraki, got a stormy reception when he attempted to defend government policy. He said he was sure there would be "adequate provision of current mental health services before the sale proceeds".

The audience were in no mood for this type of political double talk and Kidd struggled to make himself heard, even with the aid of the microphone.

Jeanette Fitzsimons of the Alliance criticised both National and Labour governments for running down health services in general, and mental health in particular. She said community care had been used as a cheap option.

Fitzsimons warned that if Kingseat is sold it would not be replaced and committed the Alliance to retaining Kingseat.

Labour MP Mike Moore predicted Kingseat would be sold and leased

back short term. He said the system is failing the patients and the government has failed the parents of patients. He called for a moratorium on the sale.

Salvation Army's Major Campbell Roberts criticised the lack of resources, planning and broken government promises. Dunedin staff repeatedly asked for extra services to help avoid the recent tragedy with Eric Gellatly, he said.

"Existing services continue to be dismantled." Roberts insisted that an urgent review of all health services was needed.

During a panel discussion, PSA Northern Regional manager Joe Toner said the main thing needed was a ministerial task force to investigate the region's mental health needs.

In response to a demand from the floor, Labour, Alliance and NZ First repre-

sentatives all pledged to involve themselves in any campaign to save Kingseat.

Williams moved a resolution opposing any sale of Kingseat. This was endorsed unanimously. He also invited those present to form an action committee to begin the campaign.

Supporters of the "Save Kingseat Hospital campaign" can contact Patra on (09) 268-0152.

Council workers fight individual contracts

500 ANGRY Auckland City Council workers marched on the central council offices after a stopwork meeting on November 8.

ACC bosses are trying to force individual employment contracts onto staff, who are currently covered by a collective employment contract. They are also "offering" a 3.5 percent salary increase.

The workers attended a stopwork meeting where the employers demands were solidly rejected. Resolutions that they continue to "vigorously pursue a collective employment contract" and endorsing union claims that include a 5 percent wage increase were warmly approved.

The workers want a one-year CEC, whereas the boss's IEC has no termination date.

While a motion from the floor for an immediate strike was voted down, the meeting elected a strike action committee to co-ordinate tactics for work-to-rule type actions. Another meeting is to be held in three weeks.

A resolution from the floor proposing the march to corporate headquarters to confront Chief Executive Officer Bruce Anderson was passed by a large majority, as were others that workers fax or e-mail Anderson to express dis-

gust at the executive's attitude and that they return the draft employment contracts to the CEO.

The marchers went right up to Anderson's office, but were told he wasn't in the building. Eventually Director of Corporate Services Brian Fergus agreed to meet the crowd outside.

Before the rally had ended mayor Les Mills arrived and found himself faced by the workers. Mills tried to dodge any responsibility for the actions of his council's executives.

"This is not a political issue" Mills lamely told the workers. "It is an issue between you and your employer."

There was a solid spirit of unity among the workers as they left the rally. Some commented that their employers had said they couldn't unite - but they had proven otherwise.

The Socialist Workers Organisation distributed a leaflet exposing individual contracts to the workers as they entered their meeting. The leaflet linked employer pressure for IECs to the increase exploitation and privatisation ACC staff have experienced over recent years.

"If you go out for public support it will be there," the leaflet stated.

How Cleaners Lost Their Jobs

SOME MONTHS ago, Ian Frame - chief executive of Canterbury Health - called for "open tenders" for a three year cleaning contract at Christchurch Public and Burwood Hospitals.

This meant P&O (Crothalls), having no obligation to honour the terms of the existing employment contract, won the tender by slashing the wages and conditions of hospital cleaners. While the hourly rate was increased slightly, all rates and conditions and existing hours of work, were reduced.

Weekend workers, (already low paid and without a wage increase for six years), discovered they now faced pay cuts of around \$100 a week.

Some cleaners were given three hours to sign on a take it or leave it basis. Others were not even of-

fered a job. A number of these workers had worked at the hospital for over twenty years.

On October 27, when cleaners refused to sign the new contract, P&O effectively dismissed them, and recruited scabs to do the work, flying some in from Southland. Dunedin and Auckland.

Canterbury Health stands to save \$700,000 over the next three years.

On November 7, it announced a similar open tendering policy for its catering contract.

Canterbury Health's intention is to make cost savings through big cuts to wages and conditions. Its strategy is to achieve this by taking on each section of hospital workers one by one.

More reports back page



Mayor Les Mills looks sheepishly at the ground while PSA organiser Basil Prestige tells council workers to carry on the struggle back in their workplaces

Cleaners fight for jobs

"OUR JOBS - scabs out!"
That was the chant as 60 cleaners and supporters marched along the corridors of Burwood Hospital in Christchurch on October 31.

The cleaners were demanding their jobs back after P&O dismissed them for refusing to accept a drastically downgraded employment contract after the company successfully tendered for hospital cleaning at Christchurch Crown Health Enterprise (Canterbury health).

Cleaners have mounted pickets almost every day after their effective dismissal on October 27.

Strong actions have been organised to put pressure on P&O and Canterbury Health to re-employ the cleaners on former wages and conditions.

Actions include:

• **October 31:** Cleaners march through the corridors of Burwood Hospital. One scab is surrounded and told what they think of strike-breakers, before being presented with a copy of Jack London's scathing description of a scab.

• **November 1:** Cleaners walk into the office of Canterbury Health Chief Executive Ian Frame and demand the end of P&O's contract and their reinstatement on former pay and conditions.

• **November 4:** Cleaners picket P&O ship at Lyttelton. Loading of the ship is delayed for three hours as watersiders refuse to cross the picket.

Cleaners finally march off after the police give final trespass warning and receive enthusiastic ap-

plause from watersiders and British seafarers.

• **November 6:** Cleaners march through downtown Christchurch and defy security guards to march through the grounds of Christchurch Public Hospital. Nurses wave enthusiastically from the windows in support.



Cleaners picket at P&O ship, November 4

How cleaners can win

NURSES SHOULD refuse to work with scabs.

Throughout the cleaners struggle to win back their jobs, the Christchurch Branch of SWO has campaigned to try and convince nurses to take strike action to support them.

It did this because nurses are the key workforce on site for no hospital can operate without nurses.

United action by workers is the only sure winning strategy to counter the divisive effects of the Employment Contracts Act which is enabling employers to divide workers and drive conditions downwards.

SWO has so far produced three leaflets and had a number of conversations with nurses.

Many are sympathetic to such action but to date are waiting for a lead from delegates and union officials.

Below is the third leaflet distributed to nurses on 9 November.

Nurses - Don't work with scabs

Your CHE managers are fronting the government's health agenda which is undermining quality, accessible health care.

This cost-cutting agenda is why these managers are attacking hospital cleaners who've given years of service to the public health service. Cleaning work has been contracted out. The cleaners have been sacked because they refused to work under vastly inferior contracts.

Their union has put a picket on your hospital. But scabs have been hired to cross the picket line in defiance of trade union principles.

The cleaners can win if nurses don't work with scabs. We appeal to all nurses and to the Nurses Organisation site committee to support trade union principles and refuse to work with scabs.

A start could be made by holding, say, a half-hour protest strike by all nurses. By standing with cleaners on the picket line for half an hour, a clear message would be sent to CHE managers that their behaviour is unacceptable. This solidarity action would help build the links between different sections of health workers so vital to protect the public health service from the government's cost-cutting agenda.

This unity is urgent. Already nurse manager positions are to be chopped, while hospital catering staff face the same sort of contracting out that has hit cleaners.

Nurses - request your job delegates and union officials to organise effective actions against the use of scabs in your hospital. United we stand, divided we fall.



March around Burwood Hospital

Socialist Worker

your paper,
out every
second week



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Christchurch cleaners are continuing to fight for their jobs.

They need support. If you cannot join their pickets then send messages of support and money to:

**Canterbury Hotel
and Hospital Union
PO Box 22-277**